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Part II
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BT
UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 USIA 39952

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EO 12356 N/A

SUBJECT: FY 89 SCP FOR AFGHANISTAN: "U.S. DEMOCRATIC
- PRINCIPLES": FINAL EVALUATION

1. SUMMARY. SUBJECT PROJECT WAS CONCLUDED WITH A GENERAL EVALUATION SESSION AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION ON JUNE 13. PARTICIPANTS WERE PLEASED WITH BOTH THE SUBSTANCE AND ADMINISTRATION OF THEIR PROGRAM, AND APPRECIATED THE HIGH-LEVEL OF APPOINTMENTS (INCLUDING MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND USIA DIRECTOR GELB) AND THE FRANKNESS OF THE EXCHANGES IN THEIR PROGRAM. THEY ALSO OFFERED SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGES IN FUTURE AFGHAN IV PROJECTS AS WELL AS OTHER U.S. - AFGHAN EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

2. AS A WHOLE THE GROUP AGREED THAT, SUBSTANTIVELY, THE LECTURE/DISCUSSION SESSIONS ON THEMATIC AREAS OF FOCUS IN THE PROGRAM PROVIDED THE MOST GENERAL BENEFIT TO THE GROUP. THEY CITED IN PARTICULAR THE TALK BY DR. GARY WEAVER OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY ON AMERICAN VALUES, THE SESSION WITH DR. ELLIS KATZ OF TEMPLE UNIVERSITY ON AMERICAN FEDERALISM, AND THE HALF-DAY PROGRAM ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION WITH DR. EDWARD AZAR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND. THE SESSION WITH DR. AZAR WAS RATED AS THE BEST APPOINTMENT OF THE ENTIRE PROJECT.

3. SEVERAL OTHER ACTIVITIES STOOD OUT IN THE VISITORS' MINDS AS WELL: A CHANCE ENCOUNTER WITH SENATOR GORDON HUMPHREY IN THE BASEMENT OF THE CAPITOL ("A DREAM COME TRUE," IN THE WORDS OF ONE PARTICIPANT), WHICH DEVELOPED INTO A 20-MINUTE DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUES CURRENTLY FACING THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE AND THE NEGATIVE CHARACTERIZATION WHICH RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE RESISTANCE HAVE RECEIVED IN THE AMERICAN PRESS; AN HOUR-LONG SESSION WITH USIA DIRECTOR BRUCE GELB, AT WHICH THE PARTICIPANTS SHARED THEIR VIEWPOINTS ON THEIR IV PROGRAM EXPERIENCE AS WELL AS THEIR PROPOSALS CONCERNING OTHER USIA PROGRAMS FOR THE AFGHAN REFUGEE COMMUNITY (A MEMCON OF THIS MEETING IS BEING FORWARDED UNDER SEPARATE COVER); SEVERAL PROGRAMS WITH MEDICAL ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING SERVICES TO AFGHANS WITH WAR-RELATED INJURIES; AND MEETINGS / HOSPITALITY WITH MEMBERS OF THE AFGHAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY IN THE U.S.

4. CONCERNING PROGRAM ASPECTS RELATED TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND MINORITY RIGHTS, SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS COMMENTED ON THEIR POSITIVE AND ENLIGHTENING EXPERIENCES WITH ETHNIC AND RACIAL GROUPS. THEY COMMENTED THAT PRIOR EXPOSURE TO SOVIET DISINFORMATION HAD NOT PREPARED THEM FOR THEIR ENCOUNTERS WITH SUCCESSFUL, MAINSTREAM BLACKS AND HISPANICS WHO, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION CONTINUE TO BE ISSUES IN AMERICAN SOCIETY, ASSURED THEM THAT ALL MINORITY GROUPS ARE RESPECTED AND GIVEN FAIR ACCESS TO THE AMERICAN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS. IN APPLYING AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES TO A POLITICAL SYSTEM IN AFGHANISTAN, HOWEVER, TWO OBSTACLES WERE CITED: THE HIGH RATE OF ILLITERACY, WHICH WOULD MAKE MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

IN SUCH A SYSTEM DIFFICULT FOR A LARGE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION; AND THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF THE SOVIET DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN, WHICH HAVE "CLOUDED" THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY IN THE MINDS OF MANY AFGHANS.

5. CONCERNING THOSE ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM WHICH WERE NOT FULLY SATISFACTORY, PARTICIPANTS CITED THE MEETING WITH FORMER AMBASSADOR ROBERT NEUMAN AT THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AND STRATEGIC STUDIES, WITH WHOM NO REAL "DISCUSSION" COULD BE ESTABLISHED; A MEETING WITH THE CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION IN WASHINGTON (THE BRIEFER WAS UNPREPARED FOR THE GROUP); AND THE VISIT TO THE AFGHAN STUDIES CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA. THE DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE VISIT TO THE AFGHAN STUDIES CENTER WAS A SURPRISE TO US, AS THE CENTER HAS IN THE PAST BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF AFGHAN IV PROJECTS. IN THIS CASE, THE FACT THAT THE ACADEMIC YEAR AT THE UNIVERSITY HAD ALREADY ENDED AT THE TIME OF THE GROUP'S VISIT, AND THE TIMING (OVER THE MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY WEEKEND) WERE PROBABLY THE PRIMARY FACTORS IN THE GROUP'S DISSATISFACTION.

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6. ASPECTS OF THE MAKE-UP OF THE GROUP ALSO ENTERED THE PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF THE PROJECTS' SUCCESS (THESE COMMENTS WERE GENERALLY OFFERED IN THE PRIVATE, INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH THE PARTICIPANTS FOLLOWING THE GROUP EVALUATION SESSION). SOME OF THE MEDICAL DOCTORS IN THE GROUP SUGGESTED THAT A SMALLER GROUP, COMPOSED ONLY OF MEDICAL DOCTORS, WOULD HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE FOR THEM, ALLOWING THEM TO FOCUS MORE SPECIFICALLY ON THEIR AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL INTEREST. THE SINGLE WOMAN PARTICIPANT ARGUED STRONGLY FOR INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN THE IV PROGRAM BY AFGHAN WOMEN, AND SUGGESTED THAT IN A GROUP OF ALL WOMEN SHE COULD HAVE BEEN A MORE PRODUCTIVE PARTICIPANT. IN GENERAL, THE CONSENSUS WAS THAT SMALLER GROUPS WOULD BE BETTER, AND A GREATER ETHNIC DIVERSITY AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS WOULD BE BENEFICIAL BOTH FOR THE IV PROGRAM AND THE AFGHAN REFUGEE COMMUNITY. FOCUSING SUCH PROGRAMS IN THE FUTURE ON YOUNGER PARTICIPANTS -- OR AT LEAST EXCLUDING RELATIVELY OLDER, "INFLEXIBLE" PARTICIPANTS -- WAS ALSO SUGGESTED, AS A MECHANISM FOR ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AFGHAN IV PROGRAM AS A WHOLE.

7. IN SUMMARIZING THEIR PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING AMERICANS THE PARTICIPANTS CITED SUCH "AMERICAN" CHARACTERISTICS AS "HARD-WORKING," "OPEN," "SELF-RELIANT," AND "HOSPITABLE"; SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS INDICATED THAT THEY INTEND TO COMMUNICATE THESE ASPECTS OF THE U.S. TO THEIR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN. ONE PARTICIPANT COMMENTED THAT THE VISIT CONVINCED HIM, AS HE HAD NOT BEEN CONVINCED BEFORE, OF THE "LONG-TERM DOMINANCE OF DEMOCRACY OVER COMMUNISM."

8. E/VGN IS PLEASED WITH THE SUCCESS OF THIS PROJECT, AND COMMENDS THE POST FOR THE SELECTION OF THE EXCELLENT PARTICIPANTS. WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO RECEIVE ANY FEEDBACK THE POST RECEIVES FROM THE PARTICIPANTS ONCE THEY HAVE RETURNED TO PESHAWAR AND REFLECTED MORE ON THEIR EXPERIENCES. ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS, MR. RAFI, MAINTAINED A DIARY DURING THE PROJECT, AND INTENDS TO HAVE IT PUBLISHED; HE MAY APPROACH USIS PESHAWAR FOR SUPPORT IN ARRANGING FOR THE PUBLICATION OF AN ENGLISH VERSION OF HIS DIARY. A SECOND PARTICIPANT, DR. SAMAR, UNDERTOOK TWO ADDITIONAL DAYS OF PROGRAMMING FOLLOWING THE COMPLETION OF THE GROUP PROJECT TO VISIT MS. NANCY DUPREE OF DUKE UNIVERSITY (IS. DUPREE, A LEADING EXPERT ON AFGHAN WOMEN, IS RESEARCHING THE ROLE OF WOMEN LEADERS IN THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE).

9. THE PROJECT'S FINAL EVALUATION SESSION WAS COVERED BY THE NESA WIRELESS FILE, WHICH CARRIED AN ITEM ON THE PROJECT IN THE FILE OF JUNE 15. IN ADDITION, FIVE OF THE SEVEN PARTICIPANTS WERE INTERVIEWED ON VO'S AFGHAN SERVICE. FINALLY, WE ARE SENDING TO USIS PESHAWAR CERTIFICATES OF PARTICIPATION IN THE IV PROGRAM FOR PRESENTATION TO THE PARTICIPANTS. REGARDS. (E/VGN)

GELB